

Growth Management Planning Council Hearing

Topic: Countywide planning policies

Location: Renton City Hall, Council Conferencing Center, 7th Floor, 1055 Grady Way in Renton  
April 27, 2011

Save Black Diamond

represented by Kristen Bryant, 1006 139<sup>th</sup> PL NE, Apt C-04, Bellevue, WA 98005

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Mr. Chair, and Members of the Growth Management Planning Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you, and thank you for your public service.

I represent a group named "Save Black Diamond". If our planning policies were effective, we would not have to save Black Diamond.

Your new household growth target for the City of Black Diamond through 2031 is 1900 units, but our City just approved a development proposal to build over 6000 housing units.

We recently challenged that decision before the Growth Management Hearings Board and won, but the City is now allowing the developer to submit questionable applications in a cynical attempt to vest parts of this illegal development. It's a mess that the Courts will probably have to sort out.

Your growth target, which our tax dollars fund, is at risk of becoming meaningless bureaucratic numbers on paper. Actual growth should stay within a reasonable range of the target. In other words, if the City of Black Diamond plans for 1900 units, say, plus or minus 20%, then that would be consistent with the Regional Planning Policies.

This is important because if the county cannot plan services such as transit around these growth targets, then we all waste time and resources. 6000 units is about 300% more than your target! Does it make sense to target this growth, and drive scarce funds for roads, schools, and other services to this area that is on the far fringe of the Urban Growth Area?

You have the authority to set your targets as a range, with lower and upward limits. Good sense, and good planning strongly suggests that.

We request an amendment that would make your targets a **ceiling** as well as a floor. We note that Futurewise has also raised this as an issue, and we support their call for language to make this clear.

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If I still have time, I would like to bring another issue to your attention.

The location of schools within the rural area has been a controversial issue for years.

Schools that mostly serve urban areas should be located in urban areas.

The City of Black Diamond and Enumclaw School District are poised to accept a plan that locates 3 schools in the rural area (and there are no guarantees that it won't be more). These schools will get nearly all of their students from that huge development that I mentioned earlier. Yes, the development that is 300% larger than your growth targets.

The Enumclaw School District blatantly states on their website that a high school may be placed in a rural area. The agreement with the developer leaves this possibility wide open despite clear opposition from the majority of residents and conflict with county policy. A high school in the rural area encourages teens to drive more, clogging the roads, adding to pollution, and increasing accident risk for those students.

The developer proposed those schools to be in the rural area so that they wouldn't lose development potential within their own urban area. This is a simply ploy so they can make more money. It exports the impacts of their development on the surrounding rural and farming areas. Our wonderful farming district in the Green River Valley will experience ruinous urban impacts because of this plan. The taxpayers in the rural area will face huge run ups in their property taxes in order to pay for these urban schools.

My organization appreciates your commitment to reasonable and sustainable growth. Your policies can really protect our environment and our communities....or they can be watered down into meaningless verbiage.

We need your help to save Black Diamond to choose policies that protect our beautiful rural space, and at the same time save money for us all.